

Getting Ready for Your Next PCS Move...

by CPT Erik Lapin

The “summer rotation” season is about to start, and for many military families in the KMC, that means it is time to get ready for another permanent change of station (PCS) move. Before the movers arrive you should make your own inventory of all the items that you are going to ship. Record the make, model, serial number, date of purchase, and the purchase price of each item. You should also collect all receipts and take photographs of high value items. If you purchased antiques while you were in Europe, you should consider having them appraised (at your own expense) before you leave.



When compiling your inventory, don't “generalize” the description of an item of value. For example, do not write down “plates and glasses” when a plate or glass is Waterford crystal. Call it what it is. When the movers arrive, compare your personal inventory with the inventory the movers prepared to make sure nothing of importance has been left out, and that cartons containing high value items are indicated as such on the mover's inventory. If you have any problem with the movers, call the Quality Control/Transportation Office at Civilian 0631-536-6036/7582.

When the movers arrive at your new residence, make every effort to supervise the unloading of your household goods. Have the movers unpack as much as possible. Any damage you discover when the movers are present should be noted on the DD Form 1840 (a.k.a. the “pink form”) that the movers provide you. Damage discovered after the movers leave should be noted on the back side of the same form (the DD Form 1840R). Don't throw away any broken items prior to talking with the Claims Office staff at your new duty station. They may want to inspect the damaged items before you throw them away or have them repaired. Keep all boxes that are damaged or have holes that may have caused damage to the contents of the box during shipment. They can be valuable “evidence.”

Make sure you turn in your DD Form 1840/1840R to a claims office at your new duty station within 70 days from the date of delivery, so the office can give the carrier timely notice of damage or loss. Failure to meet the 70-day deadline will likely result in a substantial reduction in the amount payable on your claim. While the “pink form” must be turned in within 70 days, you have two years from the date of delivery to file your actual claim. Don't miss that deadline, either. It is statutory and cannot be waived, even if you miss it by only one day.

Finally, you have two options when filing a claim. The first option is to file a claim against the Government at your local claims office. Under this option, the government pays you the depreciated value of items that were lost or damaged, in accordance with claims regulations. The second option is to file your claim directly against the carrier under the so-called “Full Replacement Value” program. Your local claims office can assist you in this process. Note, however, that if you file your claim against the carrier, the carrier has the option to either replace or repair your damaged item. **Also, under the full replacement value program, you must complete the filing of your claim within 9 months from the date of delivery** rather than within the traditional 2 years.

For more information, contact the Kaiserslautern Legal Services Claims Office at DSN 483-8414/8862 or Civilian 0631-411-8414/8862.